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ABSTRACT

The Learning Center (LC) at South Plains College (SPC), in Texas, offers remedial reading instruction, college-level reading and human development, Success Seminars, orientation services, tutoring, and independent study for academic skills development. The center, which has the most successful remedial reading program in the state, combines the following four elements: a talented, dedicated, and dynamic faculty; students of all kinds; instructional support (including facilities, equipment, materials, supplies, and administration); and an administrative commitment to evaluate programs and services and to document effectiveness. All center faculty possess master's degrees with at least 18 graduate hours in an academic discipline. In 1992-93, all center faculty attended a critical thinking workshop, an academic support conference, and two teleconferences. The center provided services to over 2,230 individuals who made a total of 17,595 visits, representing a 79% increase in the number of visits from the previous year. In comparison with seven community colleges in the West Texas region, SPC had the highest retention rate among students who completed remediation (93%). With a reduction in state funding for special needs populations, the center's total 1992-93 funding was 6% lower than the previous year, although institutional funding to the LC was up 4%. All aspects of the center's operation are routinely assessed, including faculty and tutor performance, and student outcomes. Progress on meeting the center's goals and objectives for the 1992-93 academic year; a discussion of student demographics; results of standardized tests before and after remediation; tables of evaluative data; and sample program evaluation forms are included in this annual report. (PAA)

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Necessary, but Insufficient: The Learning Center's 1992-93 Annual Report

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May 1993

IC 930 372

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Acknowledgements

As clearly identified and stated in this Annual Report, the success of the Learning Center is attributed to the talent, energy, enthusiasm, and dedication of the professionals who work with the students seeking our services. Those professionals serve in various capacities, as classroom teachers, lab teachers, advisors and counselors, secretary, attendants, and tutors. Specifically, I would like to thank Ms. Glenda Shamburger, Ms. Anne Solomon, Ms. Marla Turrentine, and Mr. David Hardy for their commitment to the Learning Center and the students we serve. Also, I would like to thank the Lab Tutors who worked closely with Mr. Hardy during the 1992-93 academic year, Andrew Allison, Maggie Durham, and Jackie Garner.

Those of us who work in the Learning Center also appreciate the support and confidence of those with whom we work daily. In particular, we thank the Counseling Center, the Office of Special Services, and the Dean of Students Office for being such good neighbors and sharing our goals and objectives for students--that they be allowed and encouraged to achieve their full potential at South Plains College.

Finally, I would like to thank Ms. Deanna Hines (and her helpers Robin Galloway and Beverly Williams) for their efforts in data collection and compilation. Without their hard work, persistence, and insistence on accuracy and completeness, this document would be without substance.

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Abstract

The South Plains College Learning Center is one of sixteen most successful programs in Texas and has the most successful reading remediation program in the state. This Annual Report from the Learning Center details operations in the academic support program, including reading remediation, college-level reading and human development, Success Seminars, orientation services, tutoring, and independent-study for academic skills development. Four factors necessary for success are described and discussed; however, obstacles and challenges also are presented. The data used to evaluate the program are included. The conclusion deals with the fact that even necessary conditions do not always guarantee success.

Necessary, but Insufficient: The Learning Center's 1992-93 Annual Report

Introduction

"Yes," the professor says, "it would seem that these conditions all are necessary in order to obtain the desired result. However," she pauses and cautions, "the question remains, if all the necessary conditions are in place, will they be sufficient to bring about the desired effect?"

Thus begin countless lectures in courses on research methodology along with constant warnings to novice investigators against being too quick to claim that the necessary conditions share a causal relationship with outcomes. Indeed, it appears that quite often the necessary conditions or factors are present and, yet, the desired effect is not achieved.

Therefore, whenever the desired effect is accomplished, there is almost always an element of mystery, an amorphous aura of wonder, an amused, but delighted response of "Ah-h-h! How did this happen?" Such was the state of things in the South Plains College Learning Center this spring when it was announced that the Learning Center had the most successful reading program in the state of Texas (Linda Gibbs, personal communication, May 18, 1993).

How does success of this kind come about? What are the necessary conditions? No argument is offered here that these conditions or factors are sufficient to bring about success--to the contrary, in fact--but here is an endeavor to outline the necessary factors.

Successful academic support services and academic skills development require the following: (a) first and foremost, a talented, versatile, dedicated, and dynamic faculty; (b) students of all kinds; (c) adequate instructional support (including facilities, equipment, materials and supplies, and administration); and, (d) an administrative (at least at the midmanagement level) commitment to evaluate programs and services and to document effectiveness. In this Annual Report, each of these four elements will be described and discussed in some detail.

Faculty: The Best and the Brightest

Faculty in the Learning Center are selected by virtue of meeting selected criteria (Platt, 1989). First, as an absolute requirement, the faculty must possess an understanding of the cognitive and metacognitive processes underlying reading comprehension. This understanding allows the faculty to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses in reading (and in learning, generally). Faculty then, possessing knowledge of individual learner characteristics, can plan for and provide appropriate instruction to meet the diverse needs of students. This means that faculty are able to individualize instruction within a highly-structured framework. Thus, faculty account for individual learner differences, yet provide the structure that

at-risk students (and students generally) find beneficial (Kulik and Kulik, 1991).

In other words, the faculty are well-prepared to teach reading, the foundation skill for most other learning in college-level courses. They are talented in that they possess both generalized and specific knowledge about learning processes, expertise in diagnosing assets and liabilities, and skill in facilitating learning through a variety of instructional modes.

Reading faculty are expected to possess strong communication skills, experience in working with adult learners, and broad interests in many fields. In addition to these characteristics, faculty teaching developmental reading must present evidence of strong interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, including a delight in teaching, patience, flexibility, creativity, honesty, and high but realistic expectations for their students.

Moreover, their excellence as teachers is demonstrated in several obvious ways. They possess academic credentials exceeding those specified by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS, 1992-93) for teaching developmental courses; in fact, all faculty in the Learning Center possess credentials allowing them to teach college-transfer courses in specific academic disciplines. They provide documentation of their participation in professional development activities and they undergo student evaluations. Finally, their products (the students they teach) are assessed to assure quality.

All faculty in the Learning Center possess masters degrees with at least a minimum of 18 graduate hours in an academic discipline. All three classroom faculty hold the rank of Assistant Professor of Reading; the only faculty member (Ms. Glenda Shamburger) with service meeting the eligibility requirements for tenure was awarded tenure this spring.

In the 1992-93 academic year, the faculty participated in a number of professional development activities. All faculty attended and participated in a critical thinking workshop led by Dr. Gerald Nosich from the Center for Critical Thinking at Sonoma State University and a study skills seminar led by Dr. Edward Florey (formerly Dean of Students at Alabama State University). All faculty also participated in the Conference for Academic Support Programs in Ft. Worth last October. At the CASP Conference, Ms. Deanna Hines (the Learning Center secretary and office manager) and Dr. Gail Platt made a presentation on accountability through documentation of academic support services. In addition, Dr. Platt addressed the Texas Academic Skills Council regarding increasing the difficulty level of the TASP test in order to make it a more useful assessment. Subsequently, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board reconvened the TASP Content-Area Committees and a revised TASP test will be offered in the fall 1993.

Faculty also attended two teleconferences, one on sex equity ("The Second Shift" featuring Dr. Arlie Hochschild) and

one on using computers in writing classes ("Adventures in Writing" featuring Kirkwood Community College).

One faculty member, Ms. Anne Solomon, completed coursework at Appalachia State University as a Kellogg Scholar to become certified as a developmental education specialist; part of her practicum for achieving this certification included making four presentations to SPC faculty on learning styles, instructional styles, and adaptive teaching methodologies. Ms. Marla Turrentine made two special presentations--by invitation--at two different Speech/ESL Conferences, and she was asked to serve on the International Student Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Ms. Shamburger continued her participation in the Caprock Area Writing Project and also was a nominee for the Teacher of Excellence Award, Spring 1993.

Dr. Platt served on an advisory committee for Brookhaven College (Dallas County Community College District) on a federal project developing reading materials for technical fields and as a grant reader for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; she also served as a member of the Executive Committee for the Texas Association of Developmental Educators. She also attended the Texas Community College Women Educators Conference in the summer 1993. Working with the Texas Association of Developmental Educators (TADE) as Regional Membership Coordinator, Dr. Platt met with the CASP Executive Committee in Houston on June 5. Dr. Platt, Ms. Shamburger, and Dr. Nancy Wood, Chair of Freshman English at the University of

Texas in Arlington, will be CASP Institute Leaders this fall in Houston.

Ms. Solomon and Dr. Platt participated in the Ninth Annual All-University Conference for Women in Higher Education at Texas Tech University, featuring Ellen Goodman as keynote speaker. Subsequently, Ms. Solomon was asked to serve on the Steering Committee for the Tenth Annual Conference. Also during the summer, Ms. Solomon and Dr. Platt participated, with the support of the SPC Tech-Prep Program, in the Learning Styles Institute led by Dr. Rita Dunn and offered through the Region XVII Education Service Center.

The newest member of the Learning Center faculty, Mr. Dave Hardy, participated in the CASP Conference, the Critical Thinking workshop, and received training in teaching the College Success Course (in a "Be Here Now" seminar offered by College Survival, Inc.) in spring 1992. He also has worked closely with Ms. Gwenda Hannah, CCC trainer, in learning about the computer system used in the Learning Center Lab.

Student evaluations conducted during the fall 1992 revealed a 4.46 mean rating on an 11-item 5-point Likert scale. This rating was somewhat comparable to the institutional mean of 4.56. The qualifier "somewhat" is used to highlight the fact that institutional aggregate data apparently include calculations for 23 items although only 3 departments out of 14 ask student opinion on more than 9 items. In addition, items following number 9 vary among the 3 departments asking for additional data.

Therefore, the reported institutional mean is not a valid standard for comparing individual department ratings. It is, however, possible to compare validly fall 1992 ratings with fall 1991 ratings for the Learning Center which are similar (fall 1992: 4.46; fall 1991: 4.44).

In comparing ratings on specific items, the faculty in the Learning Center earned slightly higher ratings on two of the items, fairness of examinations and accessiblity. Learning Center ratings on other items were within .20 of the institutional means.

Learning Center faculty also engage is their own classroom evaluations, often administering anonymous questionnaires in class. These assessments have directed attention in four areas. First, there is a problem with inappropriate placement of students into developmental courses (for example, students are found in developmental reading courses who need to take writing courses, or students often take developmental math for TASP compliance although they have passed the TASP math test and should be remediating in reading or English, or students are placed into the wrong level of remediation simply because the time the course was offered was more suitable to the student's individual schedule).

Second, students do not continue in remediation until they have passed all relevant parts of the TASP test; thus, they fail to realize the benefits of remediation. To illustrate, students often take and make satisfactory progress in remedial reading;

however, instead of retaking the TASP test upon completion of the reading course, they wait a semester or two--usually while their skills--due to the lack of reinforcement--deteriorate and, thus, when they retake the TASP test, they do not pass.

Third, students seem resistant to taking reading classes because the word "reading" carries the stigma of illiteracy.' Students can read to the extent that they have phonic skills and can "sound out" unknown words. They often claim to be good oral readers although they have trouble understanding what they read. Therefore, the Learning Center will propose to the Curriculum Committee and Academic Council in the fall 1993 that the descriptive titles of reading courses be changed to reflect the higher-ordered cognitive and metacognitive skills in the reading curriculum.

Finally, students and other faculty often dismiss the importance of higher-ordered thinking skills--activated and promoted by critical reading--which ensure high academic standards and facillitate student success in subsequent upper-level coursework (upon transfer to a senior institution) and/or upon entering the workforce. The Learning Center will continue to publicize its programs, the accountability of its programs, and that developing academic skills is an effective way to increase and maintain high academic standards in an open-admissions college.

Students: At-Risk, But Succeeding

During the 1992-93 academic year, 2,230 different individuals were provided services through the South Plains College Learning Center with over 17,595 visits. This was only a 4 percent increase in total number of students served; however, it represents a 79 percent increase in the number of visits. In other words, although the number of individual students seeking services through the Learning Center did not significantly increase, there was a dramatic increase in students' requests and the amount/level of services provided.

In broad terms, the SPC Learning Center serves approximately 60 percent of all the students enrolled in the college at the Levelland campus. This may very well be a "ceiling number" since academic support services tend to reach less than half (and sometimes many fewer) of the student body at any given institution. As the institution experiences slow and steady growth, the number of students seeking help in the Learning Center should keep pace.

However, as community colleges fulfill their original mission of maintaining an "open door" to academically under-prepared students--and with that population of at-risk students ever-increasing, it is likely that requests for assistance through academic support services at community colleges will increase disproportionately to the overall increase in enrollment, but in proportion to the needs of the students admitted. Thus, the Learning Center at South Plains College

expects a continuing substantial increase in the number of requests from students for assistance--just as 1992-93 saw a 79 percent increase over 1991-92 which saw a 40 percent increase over the 1990-91 academic year.

Student Demographics. Just over one-half (51 percent) of students served in the Learning Center were female with 49 percent being male. Reflective of overall enrollment patterns at the institution, 65 percent of the students served by the Learning Center were Anglo, 27 percent were Hispanic, and almost 7 percent were African-American. Three-fourths of the students were between the ages of 18 and 24; most of the other students served (23 percent) were 25 or older. Less than 1 percent of the total served were younger than 18. These percentages are also consistent with data from the 1991-92 academic year.

Students participated in a variety of services provided through the Learning Center, including orientation programs, independent study in the Independent Study Lab/Computer Lab, the College Success Course (Human Development HD 130), reading and English classes, tutoring services, seminars and workshops, study skills counseling, and inquiries regarding programs and services. With steady growth in most services, dramatic increases were seen in the number of students requesting tutoring (14 percent increase), those requesting assistance for entry into the nursing program (more than 5 times as many as in 1991-92), and those seeking academic/study skills counseling (more than 4 times as many). The most popular services in the Learning Center were

orientation programs (with 1,390 students participating) followed by tutoring services (with 1,036 students participating).

The majority of students receiving services had declared majors in technical programs of study (993 or 44 percent), closely followed by students declaring transfer majors (865 or 39 percent) with less than 10 percent of the students being undecided (208 or 9 percent). Some individuals served were not yet enrolled in classes at the college, but were preparing for and interested in enrolling (154 or 7 percent); most of these students were interested in technical fields, particularly nursing.

TASP Scores and PTT Scores. Students at South Plains College are identified as being academically disadvantaged if they fail any part of the official Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) test or Pre-TASP (PTT) test. This year, almost two and a-half times as many students had taken the TASP (976) as had taken the PTT (367). Of those taking the TASP, the overwhelming majority passed both the reading and writing parts of the test (79.8 percent and 82.6 percent, respectively). Students receiving services in the Learning Center performed less well on the TASP math test, with only 73.9 percent passing.

Compared with students statewide taking the TASP, SPC students, as a group, performed significantly poorer. Whereas almost 94 percent statewide passed the reading test, 90 percent passed the writing test, and 83 percent passed the math test, the data reveal that SPC students, overall, scored significantly

lower on each part of the test (November 14, 1992 test data supplied by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board TASP-FYI Newsletter).

This overall performance was somewhat poorer than students' TASP performance in 1991-92. For example, a year ago 85 percent of the students passed the reading test, 82 percent passed the writing test, and 76 percent passed the math test.

As has been the case in the past, students less prepared for college tend to take the PTT and their performance is consistently poorer on PTT than their counterparts on the official TASP (Platt, 1992). Only 55 percent of the students attempting the PTT reading test passed; only 52 percent of the students attempting the PTT writing test passed; and, only 32 percent of those attempting the PTT math test passed. Although performance for the 1992-93 cohort on PTT was poorer than on TASP, this year's cohort outperformed last year's group on PTT when only 45 percent passed the reading test, 45 percent passed the writing test, and 27 percent passed the math test.

TASP Status. Only 26 percent of the students receiving assistance in the Learning Center this year had passed all parts of the TASP test (compared to 33 percent of the students last year); 16 percent (as last year) failed one or more parts of the official TASP. Almost 16 percent of the students served were exempt from TASP by virtue of earning college credits prior to September 1989 (compared to 23 percent last year). Just over 3 percent (same as last year) of the students were exempt from TASP

by enrolling in certificate programs requiring less than 9 hours of general education. Finally, a healthy 19 percent of the students provided no documentation of their TASP status; this was an increase over the 12 percent without documentation in the 1991-92 academic year.

This final piece of data signals an alarming practice of allowing students to register for classes without providing appropriate documentation of college hours earned prior to 1989 or of having taken and passed all parts of the official TASP test. With close to 20 percent of the students served by the Learning Center having no TASP documentation, it is inevitable that many students are ineligible to register at the institution or are in need of academic support services mandated by law for at-risk students or, very likely, in both categories. Until students are required to provide appropriate documentation, it is unlikely that reading, writing, and math programs will have the opportunity to serve all needy students. Furthermore, this observation helps explain the 34 percent decrease in the total number of students served through the Learning Center's top-rated reading program.

Remediation and TASP Success. Data from the April 1993 TASP administration are not yet available; therefore, this Annual Report does not contain a complete report on reading remediation and TASP success. Nonetheless, data from the fall 1992 semester are reported.

With 200 students enrolled in remedial reading courses in the fall, the success rate (average passing rate on TASP reading) was 85 percent in the exit-level courses (Reading 035, 026, and English 038) and in noncourse-based remediation. In 1991-92, the success rate was 75 percent, and in 1990-91, it was 78 percent.

Specificially, in Reading 035, 17 of the 22 students (77 percent) who attempted the TASP passed the reading test. Their scores ranged from 220 to 284 ($m = 236.5$). Of those who did not pass the test, one student scored 208, one scored 207 (up from a previous score of 168), one scored 204 (up from 189), and one scored 179 (up from 116).

In Reading 026, 13 of the 16 students (81 percent) who attempted the test passed reading. Their scores ranged from 222 to 279 ($m = 250.7$). Of those who did not pass, one scored 215 and one scored 207. One student had taken the test in September when the semester first began and scored 144.

All three of the students in noncourse-based remediation who attempted the TASP passed reading. Their scores ranged from 243 to 295 ($m = 267$). Since all three had previously attempted the reading test, their average gain in their reading score for the semester was 51.3 points.

Students enrolled in English 038 (a reading and writing course) also performed well in the fall. Eight of the 9 students (89 percent) who attempted the reading test passed; those same 9 students attempted the writing test and all 9 (100 percent) passed. Reading scores ranged from 226 to 272 ($m = 249.1$); the

one student who did not pass scored 215. All 9 students scored 240 on the writing test with a writing sample score of 6.

Students who take lower-level reading courses are expected to take longer than one semester to prepare for and pass the TASP; however, 33 students enrolled in Reading 034 attempted TASP in the fall, and 18 passed (55 percent). Their scores ranged from 221 to 280 (m = 242.2). Of those who failed, 8 scored within 14 points of passing (scoring between 206 and 219).

In the lowest level reading course (Reading 030), 4 students attempted TASP and 3 passed the reading test. Passing scores ranged between 222 and 242 (m = 235.3).

The Learning Center does not purport to collect statistics regarding remediation in writing (apart from English 038) or in math; however, since that data are not reported in a readily available format and since the Learning Center seeks to use such data for simple comparison purposes only, the Learning Center has collected limited data comparing the success of students in reading remediation with those in writing and math remediation. The results show that from a random sampling of 75 students enrolled in writing remediation, 44 students attempted the TASP writing test; 34 of those students (77 percent) passed. In math, from a random sampling of 66 students in remediation, 23 attempted the TASP math test and 13 (56 percent) passed. In sum, the performance of SPC students in reading remediation appears exemplary by numerous standards.

Statewide comparisons. Those standards would include the performance of SPC students on a variety of TASP performance measures. For example, SPC students (from the 1989 cohort) who completed remediation had a higher retention rate (93 percent) than did students who were identified as not needing remediation (85 percent). These data are in stark opposition with statewide data demonstrating a 91 percent retention rate for students who never needed remediation compared with an 89 percent retention rate for students who needed and completed remediation. (See Appendix A for specific details on these data.)

SPC students who completed remediation had comparable success in passing college-level English (92 percent) with those students identified as not requiring remediation (93 percent). Likewise, students who completed remediation had slightly better success in passing college-level algebra (75 percent) versus those who were identified as not requiring remediation (73 percent).

Statewide data were lower in both English and math with those not needing remediation passing college-level English at a somewhat higher rate than those who completed remediation (85 and 80 percent, respectively). And, in math, there were significant differences with 75 percent of the students statewide not requiring remediation passing college algebra, but only 64 percent of those who completed remediation passing.

In comparison with 7 community colleges in the West Texas region, South Plains College had the highest retention rate among

students who completed remediation (at 93 percent). SPC had the second highest passing rate for college-level English among students who completed remediation (at 92 percent, following Clarendon College's 94 percent), and SPC tied for the highest passing rate for college algebra (with Frank Phillips College at 75 percent). (See Appendix B for complete data.)

Instructional Support: Five Loaves and a Few Fish

The adequacy of instructional support, including facilities, equipment, materials and supplies, and administration, can--at least superficially--be gauged by examining budgets. Granted, facilities are maintained apart from departmental allocations, and administrative support can be evidenced in ways not directly tied to the expenditure of funds. Nonetheless, departmental budgets do reflect a certain level of administrative support and serve as a rather objective measure of equipment, materials and supplies support.

Interestingly, the Learning Center's total allocation for funds for the 1992-93 academic year (at $263,274.00) was 6 percent less than the Learning Center's allocation for the 1991-92 academic year (at $279,863.00). This difference was largely attributable to a 35 percent decrease in funding from state/federal sources earmarked to serve special populations. It should be noted that the institution's funding of the Learning Center in 1992-93 was up by 4 percent over the previous year.

However, the 4 percent increase in institutional funds in

in student requests for services through the Learning Center experienced in 1992-93. Moreover, the 1991-92 academic year saw a 40 percent increase in requests for Learning Center services.

The upcoming 1993-94 academic year looks no brighter in regard to the availablility of funds with the institutional allocation unknown at this time, but the request (at $216,363.00), initially, was less than the allocation in 1992-93. In all probability, less than the requested amount will be funded. In regard to state/federal funds for special populations, the picture is no better with a 21 percent reduction in funds for 1993-94.

Prior to the revised Carl Perkins' Applied Technical and Vocational Act (1990), the Learning Center--for a period of six years--received no funds for serving academically or economically disadvantaged students, relying instead, solely on institutional funds to provide services to eligible students. With the initial funds available for the 1991-92 academic year (the first year such funds were available under the reauthorized act), the Learning Center began to catch-up on what had become a six-year lag.

Now with the redirection of funds away from serving special populations (academically/economically disadvantaged) and towards vocational education program support, the Learning Center remains behind in instructional support--unable to keep pace with increasing student demands and a rapidly evolving and expensive technology for teaching students with special needs. Thus, when

technology for teaching students with special needs. Thus, when it comes to instructional support, the Learning Center faculty accomplish a great deal with students in spite of the lack of adequate funds to meet students' needs.

Those who argue that money is not the answer to improving the quality of education could easily cite the SPC Learning Center as one example of that theory in practice. The superior faculty in the Learning Center (already described and discussed in this Annual Report) achieve remarkable success with students (as already described and discussed in the report). Furthermore, they do so with a boundless energy, imagination, and devotion to teaching that is independent of monetary rewards, fancy gizmos, or state-of-the-art wizardry. Again, it boils down to quality instruction made possible only through the efforts of quality faculty. All in all, it is not unlike the Biblical passage describing one of Jesus's miracles: feeding thousands of people with just five loaves of bread and a few fish.

A Commitment to Evaluate, A Commitment to Excellence

Finally, the Learning Center maintains its commitment to evaluate its programs and services, especially in terms of students outcomes, and to disseminate widely the results of its evaluation. This Annual Report is one of the chief ways the Learning Center accomplishes this goal. Last year's Annual Report ("Assessing Program Effectiveness: It's a Tough Job, But Somebody's Got to Do It") became the subject of a CASP Conference

presentation which was well-attended and well-received by conferees. The document also was submitted and accepted by the ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges (Platt, 1992).

All aspects of the Learning Center's operation are routinely assessed, including the performance of faculty in courses taught, the performance of students on TASP and in subsequent coursework, the performance of tutors, students' opinions of the computer/independent-study lab, and students' opinions of Success Seminars. (See Appendices C, D, and E for examples of student survey forms used.)

Peter Kugel, a computer science professor at Boston College, wrote in a letter published in the Chronicle of Higher Education recently (April 24, 1993), that colleges owe "prospective students and their parents, the employers of our graduates, and the various constituencies that help pay our salaries . . . an honest account of what our students accomplish at college." He goes on to explain why institutions aren't more accountable; he concludes, "When it comes to accountability for what our students really learn from us, the bottom line is that we really don't want to look at the bottom line." The professionals who make the Learning Center the success that it is realize that looking at the bottom line has risks and we might not always like what we will see; however, it doesn't really matter if we like the bottom line or even if we want to look at it. The fact is we must look at it.

As support for higher education dwindles across the nation, as less money is available for more institutions and more students, accountability becomes even more crucial. Public institutions which once claimed to be state-supported now realize that--at best--they are state-assisted. More than ever before, colleges must be able to show our constituents that they are getting their money's worth.

Conclusions

As in past years, the Learning Center includes a report on goals in the Annual Report. In 1992-93, the following six goals were set forth:

(1) Expand CCC services in the Learning Center Lab.
(2) Respond promptly to the needs and concerns of faculty as revealed by spring 1992 survey.
(3) Continue efforts to forge relationships with departments on campus to form partnerships in learning.
(4) Continue efforts to gather, analyze, and report data documenting program effectiveness in support of remedial instruction and academic support services.
(5) Expand the number and topics of Success Seminars.
(6) Continue efforts to establish a warmer and friendlier climate on campus for all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, and learning differences.

In evaluating progress towards accomplishing these six goals, goals 1, 2, and 5 were accomplished in the 1992-93 academic year. The Learning Center was able to employ a full-time lab instructor (Mr. Hardy); funding limitations, however, will make it impossible for the CCC lab to expand curriculum this year as there is no money available for the upgrades to the file server and/or the individual computer stations which would allow the

Learning Center to expand its reading, ESL, and spelling curriculum.

Efforts to provide faculty with information concerning Learning Center programs and services will continue as the Learning Center undertakes a new goal in 1993-94, that goal being

> To improve faculty awareness and perception of developmental programs and their effectiveness.

The objectives for the accomplishment of this goal include the following:

(a) To discuss concerns with administrators;
(b) To brainstorm ideas with members of the Lubbock faculty;
(c) To form a Task Force with invited faculty to create a marketing campaign for the Learning Center;
(d) To carry out the campaign.

The Learning Center will address the remaining three goals, as follows:

GOAL: Continue efforts to forge relationships with departments on campus to form partnerships in learning.

Objectives:

(a) Each semester, invite one chairperson and a faculty member from the department chosen by the chairperson to lunch to discuss cooperation for meeting common objectives.
(b) Provide new faculty with information concerning the Learning Center at New Faculty Orientation;
(c) Provide faculty with information in the Community College Course.

GOAL: Continue efforts to gather, analyze, and report data documenting program effectiveness.

Objectives:

(a) Publish the 1992-93 Annual Report;
(b) Collect data for the 1993-94 Annual Report.

GOAL: Continue efforts to establish a warmer and friendlier climate on campus for all individuals.

Objective:

Sponsor a meeting for AAWCC during the fall inservice.

Summary

Over the years, the Learning Center has demonstrated its commitment to evaluate programs and document effectiveness; however, there's an old saying that using a thermometer is no way to treat a fever. We have the tools to assess the present condition, but how can we use that information to "treat the patient," in other words, to plan for the future?

At present, the local budget process does not seem tied to performance reports; however, the state is moving in that direction. Therefore, those working in the Learning Center feel that it is only a matter of time before we will have the opportunity to use our data documenting our effectiveness to compete for funds. We look forward to that opportunity.

We also realize that every department on every campus eventually will look beyond typical funding sources for the revenue to support expansion and technologies. We begin now to consider resource development as an emminent task.

Hunter Boylan, director of the National Center for Developmental Education at Appalachian State University, has raised some important questions and clearly identified a big problem:

> Community colleges are already overwhelmed. . . . If we take the worst students out of four-year schools (as a result of higher admissions standards) and hand them over to two-year schools, what have we done? . . . Are we going to give community colleges all those students but not more money to deal with them? . . . If the idea is that we would like to get rid of these students, letting them fall through the cracks of the system while pretending to do something with them, the model of the two-year school fits in well. Community colleges don't have the resources to handle the influx of students, especially needy students. (Lively, 1993, p. A28)

Boylan's points are well-taken, especially as the Texas Legislature considers requiring four-year colleges and universities to raise admissions requirements.

What Boylan fails to take into consideration is that whereas community colleges don't have the resources (in terms of quantity of staff and faculty, equipment, materials, and so forth) to handle needy students, we do have several factors in our favor. First, and perhaps most important, is that community colleges accept as part of their basic mission to provide for the education of at-risk (or needy) students. Second, community colleges tend to hire faculty who see themselves as teachers (versus researchers) and their focus is on their professional relationship with their students. Finally, college faculty who teach developmental courses for at-risk students tend to be the best faculty on campus; they possess the characteristics already described in this report and they affiliate with professional organizations and participate in professional development activities (to the extent that the budget allows) and, thus, are

prepared to succeed with students. In fact, they expect to succeed. Just as the Hawthorne effect was demonstrated with underachieving students--that if teachers expected failure, their students inevitably failed, developmental faculty on college campuses across the nation experience the Hawthorne effect consistently and constantly by expecting students to succeed and finding that students achieve beyond what their academic background and history would portend.

In this Annual Report from the SPC Learning Center, the necessary conditions for successful developmental and academic support programs have been described and discussed; however, as noted in the introduction, sometimes the necessary conditions are still insufficient to bring about the desired effect. These necessary conditions set the stage--so to speak--but, there must be something else to make things work.

The child psychologist, Harvard professor and author of numerous books, Robert Coles, recently wrote of his experiences in a Boston inner-city high school classroom. He told of a confrontation, followed by a revelation--that revelation being to show his students what he was like as a person, to share some of his thoughts and feelings about things like loneliness. In the end, he wrote

> Some of us who aim to instruct others have a lot to learn about ourselves, and, on occasion, we can do worse than sharing what we discover about ourselves with those we are trying to reach, to teach. We don't need an orgy of over-wrought psychology in our classrooms, but the blunt candor of the personal story, the proverbial cry of the heart, the soul bared to young souls embattled and in jeopardy can sometimes break the ice of class and race. Such self-revelation can help turn a "me" and a "them" into an incipient (if still fragile) "us"--a start, at least. (Chronicle of Higher Education, May 5, 1993, p. A52)

The Learning Center, then, has this to offer our constituents--a chance to become part of the "us" as we share our data, our experiences, our successes and what we have learned from our failures with the goal of empowering our students so they can experience our successes and avoid our failures. We share our personal stories. Perhaps that is the magic, the missing ingredient, the intangible quality we so often can't put our finger on that makes the difference between real success in academic support programs and mediocrity.

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DATA FROM THE "1992 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF REMEDIATION"

Prepared by Gail M. Platt, Ph.D. • South Plains College • Learning Center

South Plains College TASP Remediation Results, 1989-91 Cohort

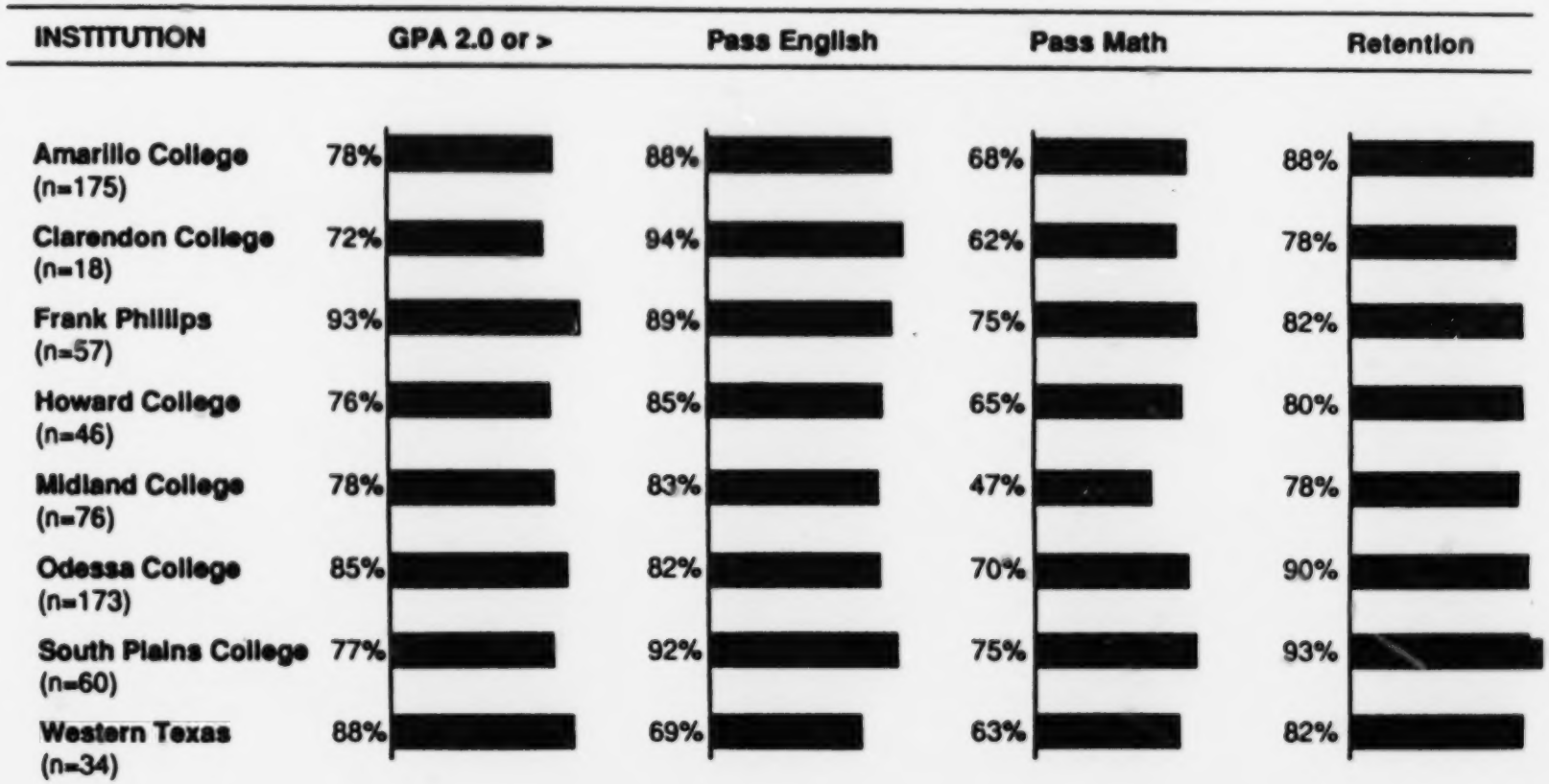
Students Not Requiring Remediation, n=348	**Statewide %**
85 percent earned a GPA of 2.0 or higher	77%
82 percent retention rate	91%
82 percent attempted college English	81%
93 percent (of those attempting) passed college English	85%
72 percent attempted college math	75%
73 percent (of those attempting) passed college math	73%
Students Completing Remediation, n=60	
77 percent earned a GPA of 2.0 or higher	74%
93 percent retention rate	89%
62 percent attempted college English	82%
92 percent (of those attempting) passed college English	80%
47 percent attempted college math	53%
75 percent (of those attempting) passed college math	64%
Students with Remediation in Progress, n=176	
47 percent earned a GPA of 2.0 or higher	44%
52 percent retention rate	58%
11 percent attempted college English	40%
50 percent (of those attempting) passed college English	61%
13 percent attempted college math	14%
56 percent (of those attempting) passed college math	38%

NOTE: Statewide percentages are extrapolated from the reported data.

Appendix A

Statistics on Remediation at Selected Community Colleges

Remediation Completers Only



Data on the 1989 TASP cohort from the "Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Remediation" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 1992). Compiled by Gail M. Platt, Ph.D. (South Plains College, Levelland)

Appendix B

Appendix C

Class Reaction Survey

I would like to know your reactions to today's class. Please read each of the statements below and circle the letter corresponding to the response which best matches your reaction to class today. Your choices are:

A = No improvement needed. (Great ideas! I understood it all.)
B = A little improvement is needed. (I didn't get it all, but I did get some good ideas.)
C = Improvement is needed. (It wasn't awful, but I didn't get much at all out of what we did in class today.)
D = Much improvement needed. (I didn't get a single thing out of what we did. I felt my time was wasted.)

Today, the guest speaker

A B C D 1. Limited what was covered to a manageable amount of material

A B C D 2. Made it clear why the material might be important

A B C D 3. Told us how we could use the material being presented

A B C D 4. Highlighted key ideas or questions

A B C D 5. Presented plenty of good examples to help clarify the concepts

A B C D 6. Provided enough variety to keep us reasonably alert

A B C D 7. Found ways to get us involved in the material

A B C D 8. Helped us summarize the main ideas we were supposed to get from the class

9. What is your overall rating of the class?
A = excellent
B = good
C = satisfactory
D = fair
F = stunk

10. What kept you from rating the class higher?

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APPENDIX D

Success Seminar on _____

Your evaluation of this seminar is important to me. Please respond to the items below with your candid opinions. It is not necessary for you to sign your name to this form.

DIRECTIONS: Circle the number which best matches your opinion using the following scale:

1= no opinion
2= poor
3= fair
4= good
5= excellent.

1. The information covered in this seminar met my expectations (i.e., was consistent with the advertising about it).

1 2 3 4 5

2. The information presented was useful.

1 2 3 4 5

3. The presenter communicated the information clearly.

1 2 3 4 5

4. The presenter appeared knowledgeable about the topic.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Overall, I would rate the seminar as

1 2 3 4 5

6. Suggestions for improvements/comments:

Appendix E
South Plains College Learning Center
Lab Evaluation

USING A RATING SCALE FROM 1 TO 6 with 1 being very good and 5 being very poor and 6 being unable to judge, please respond to the items below by circling your response.

1. The Lab environment (room, noise level, temperature, etc.) was effective for learning.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

2. The Lab Instructor and attendant(s) were attentive and personable.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

3. The materials/programs I worked with were at a suitable level of difficulty.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

4. The materials/programs I worked with helped me develop skills I wanted to improve.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

5. I received useful and relevant feedback on my skills while working in the lab.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

6. I was required by my instructor to work in the lab: ___YES
   ___NO

If you answered YES to item 6, answer the next item:
I would have worked in the Lab even if it had not been required by my instructor. ____YES ____NO

7. Lab hours were sufficient to meet my needs: ___YES ____NO

If you answered NO to item 7, answer the next item:
I would have liked to work in the lab _____.
(days, times)

8. By the end of the semester, I will have probably spent _____ (time) in the lab.

Your comments are important to us. What else could the Learning Center do or have done to help you? Please use the space on the back to share your suggestions/observations to help us improve.

FILE: LEARNING CENTER
DISK: STATISTICS
ITEM: 3-YR TRACK / NUMBERS

TERM:	90-91	91-92(42%)	92-93(1%)
RECORDS:	1502 (%)	2138 (%)	2151 (%)
SEX: MALE:	788 (52)	1085 (51)	1047 (49)
FEMALE:	714 (48)	1053 (49)	1104 (51)
ETHNICITY:			
CAUCASIAN (1):	1048 (70)	1454 (68)	1411 (66)
BLACK (2):	109 (7)	151 (7)	145 (7)
HISPANIC (3):	323 (22)	495 (23)	564 (26)
ORIENTAL (4):	3 (*)	6 (*)	4 (*)
AMER.INDIAN (5):	5 (*)	8 (*)	2 (*)
FOREIGN (6):	14 (1)	24 (1)	25 (1)
OTHER (7):	-- /	-- /	-- /
AGE: 16:	1 (*)	1 (*)	3 (*)
17:	15 (1)	13 (*)	19 (1)
18:	449 (30)	486 (23)	496 (23)
19:	420 (28)	521 (24)	542 (25)
20-25:	368 (25)	598 (28)	587 (27)
25-->:	243 (16)	466 (22)	491 (23)
UNKNOWN:	6 (*)	53 (2)	13 (1)
TASP STATUS:			
TASP/PASSED ALL (1):	466	706	578
TASP/FAILED 1-3 (2):	306	352	371
PTT/PASSED ALL (3):	104	38	65
PTT/FAILED 1-3 (4):	194	229	248
WAIVER/CERTIF. (5):	25	73	82
WAIVER/PENDING (6):	5	5	16
TASP/TRAN.PASS (7):	3	--	15
NO TESTING DOCU.(8):	55	247	429
EXEMPT/HRS<F'89 (9):	344	497	347
TASP SCORES:			
TOTAL TESTED @AREA:	(782)	(1092)	(975)
READING:	(781)	(1087)	(974)
-->219:	132	166	196
220-->:	(83%) 649	(85%) 921	(80%) 778
WRITING:	(774)	(1068)	(955)
-->219:	188	189	166
220-->:	(76%) 586	(82%) 879	(83%) 789
MATH:	(782)	(1077)	(971)
-->219:	207	260	253
220-->:	(74%) 575	(76%) 817	(74%) 718
PRE-TASP SCORES:			
TOTAL TESTED @AREA:	(358)	(351)	(367)
READING:	(356)	(346)	(364)
-->69:	192	192	162
70-->:	(46%) 164	(45%) 154	(56%) 202
WRITING:	(356)	(346)	(352)
-->69:	202	192	171
70-->:	(43%) 154	(45%) 154	(52%) /81
MATH:	(358)	(351)	(367)
-->69:	242	255	250
70-->:	(32%) 116	(27%) 96	(32%) 117

TERM:	90-91		91-92		92-93		
RECORDS:	1502		2138		2155		
GPA/*CUMULATIVE:	(90%)	(1345)	(90%)	(1941)	(92%)	(1980)	
4.0:	(3%)	39	(2%)	47	(4%)	78	
3.0-3.99:	(26%)	390	(27%)	573	(27%)	587	
2.0-2.99:	75%(39%)	582	79%(43%)	915	77%(40%)	857	-3%
1.0-1.99:	(16%)	247	(15%)	316	(14%)	310	
-->0.99:	(6%)	86	(4%)	90	(7%)	148	
W:	(5%)	82	(3%)	76	(3%)	56	
NT:	(1%)	15	(*%)	15	(1%)	32	
N-S:	(4%)	61	(5%)	106	(4%)	83	
*MEAN:		(2.52)		(2.58 / 2%)		(2.51 / -3%)	
GPA/COL.LEVEL ONLY:		(590)		(735)		(670)	
4.0:	(4%)	21	(3%)	24	(4%)	26	
3.0-3.99:	(38%)	227	(38%)	279	(36%)	240	
2.0-2.99:	82%(40%)	233	83%(42%)	305	78%(38%)	259	-6%
1.0-1.99:	(13%)	78	(13%)	95	(14%)	90	
-->0.99:	(5%)	31	(4%)	32	(8%)	55	
MEAN:		(2.70)		(2.71 / *)		(2.37 / -14%)	
GPA/ALTERNATE:		(770)		(1109)		(1342)	
4.0:	(12%)	89	(14%)	172	(18%)	244	
3.0-3.99:	(25%)	196	(26%)	323	(26%)	341	
2.0-2.99:	71%(26%)	197	82%(24%)	299	82%(29%)	388	*%
1.0-1.99:	(15%)	115	(14%)	171	(10%)	135	
-->0.99:	(14%)	107	(12%)	144	(8%)	112	
PR:	(8%)	65	(9%)	112	(9%)	122	
MEAN:		(2.29)		(2.61 / 14%)		(2.57 / -2%)	
MAJOR: T-V-O:	(50%)	756	(51%)	1100	(46%)	993	
ACADEMIC:	(36%)	535	(33%)	700	(40%)	862	
UNDECIDED:	(14%)	211	(13%)	276	(10%)	207	
OUTREACH:	(/)	N/A	(3%)	62	(4%)	89	
EQUITY ANALYSIS:		52 (3%)		89 (4%)			
MALE:	(65%)	34	(60%)	53			
FEMALE:	(35%)	18	(40%)	36			

*Mean based on completers (# in parenthesis at top of each column); however, percentages in these categories are based on whole group placement. [EX: cumulative GPA mean does not include W/NT/N-S; therefore completer #'s 1345 and 1941 are used to compute mean.] *within numbers columns indicates "less than 1%

+Percentages are tracked for success rate, therefore whole group #'s (records: top of page) are used.

For purposes of this evaluation, only those GPA's at 2.0 or higher are considered successful. [PR (Progress) grades are based on students who are progressing at a "C" level in classes, therefore PR's are included in the success rate percent for students enrolled in alternate classes.]

Outreach numbers, as well as total students served are exclusive of 79 Levelland High School students who attended a seminar given by Dr. Gail Platt. Since no statistical data is available for these students they are listed only as a notation on this report. However, a list of names is available in the Learning Center Statistics Book for 1992-1993.

LEARNING CENTER
3-YEAR TRACK--CONTACTS

TERM:	90 - 91		91 - 92		92 - 93		
	STU.	VIS.	STU.	VIS.	STU.	VIS.	(%)
DISTRIBUTION AREA							
ORIENTATION/VIDEO SEM:	1223	1223	1331	1331	1390	1390	
CCC/INDEPENDENT LAB:	133	859	107	163	126	764=	
INQUIRIES:	20	20*	30	30*	477	477*	
COLLEGE SUCCESS COURSE:	45	17+	55	27+	118	83+	
DEVELOP.COMMUNICATIONS:	7	23+	12	124+	10	122+	(-2)
READING:	255	523+	393	1730+	258	2027+	
ENGLISH:	102	85+	144	143+	102	526+	
TUTORING:	539	2500	906	4899	1036	10212	
SEMINARS:	1529	1529	1059	1059	662	662^	(-31)
ND PREP/NURS.PROGRAM:	56	247	27	261	171	942	
COUNSELING (LC OFFICE):	16	16*	61	61*	325	325*	
TOTAL VISITS:		7042+		9828+		17530+	(+78)

*under-reported

=Students listed in the CCC/Independent Lab category were in addition to any Learning Center class enrollment who participated in lab. The decrease in 91 2 due to changeover to CCC/IBM format which led to downtown, has been compensated for in 92-93. Also note that, although fewer students enrolled in LC classes in 92-93, lab contacts outside classtime have increased steadily since CCC installation.

+ Numbers listed for Learning Center class enrollment are visits to the Lab or Learning Center office IN ADDITION to regular class participation. Class attendance is indicated by "+" at the end of the number.

^Seminar participation continued to decrease due to the development of optional programs for the fullfillment of Orientation requirements. Also noted are 79 Levelland HIgh School students who attended an outreach seminar by Dr. Gail Platt. Since no statistical data is available for these students they are listed here only as a notation (they are not included in the 662). A list of names, however, is included in the Learning Center Statistics Book for 1992-93.

NOTE: Individual student names and areas where service was provided are available in the Learning Center Statistics Books for 1990 through 1993 under the semester in which the service occurred.